

Illawarra Shoalhaven regional consultation

On 28 August 2015, over 60 people who work with children and young people in the Illawarra came together to contribute to a new NSW strategic plan. This is what you told us.



What you thought was **working** for children and young people in NSW and in the Illawarra

University of Wollongong: Early Start Discovery/Engagement Centres; Science Centre, leadership, school holiday and other programs; iAccelerate

Aboriginal children and young people: homework centre (AIME); educational programs; collaboration and integration eg Cullunghutti and AMICHS

Adolescents: drop in centres eg CHAIN, Headspace

Activities: opportunities to participate in society and cultural experiences; place programs—holistic activities designed by children and young people; beaches, parks, gardens and nature; Barrack Heights “no rules” playground; Berkeley Skate Park; youth spaces; all-abilities playground at Corrimal; strong/varied club/sport/recreation culture

Services: sexual health, Kids Count (mental health); pockets of good access to a variety of services, eg early childhood intervention Information: smart online free services; the AEDC is identifying strengths and gaps; regionally based early childhood services; transition to school programs

Education: a safe, inclusive, fun environment; youth workers in schools; garden and food education; works for most; Dapto High—trial of trades

Programs around school time: “Toast and milkshake” Shellharbour, school breakfast programs; Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra engagement;

Transport: free shuttle bus; Shoalhaven student pathways pass

Business: small business startups

Service providers: consistency; partnerships; flexibility; connections with young people; connections with business; grass-roots engagement; interagencies working together; national quality framework (eg NQS, EYLF); SYFS; people talk; good network, Govt and NGO work well together

Local councils: integration with high schools (eg Kiama), child friendly, Wollongong City Council,

Other: SKIP (Skills in Paediatrics for medical, allied and nursing staff); strong social capital;

What you thought was **not working** for children and young people in NSW and in the Illawarra

An overloaded system: hard to access affordable housing, crisis accommodation (esp for young people); integrated health services (esp mental and sexual health, wellbeing), not enough non-crisis interventions, access to services outside Wollongong, Nowra; not enough homelessness services

Transport in general, limited access to free bus

Out of Home Care: number of children, lack of funding for case management, not enough foster carers

Childcare and after school care: lack of access (eg transport, places, support funding, lack of engagement); transitions to school

Disability: concerns that NDIS may not cover all needs (eg mainstream health) and that the system won't respond, children with disability having a voice; access to information

Support for families: lack of transport for parents; lack of intensive support for socially disadvantaged families; lack of parental services

Systems don't work for Aboriginal children and young people: eg poor school attendance; not enough foster carers; not enough Aboriginal people employed in mainstream services; access to early childhood options

Lower SES locations: health and wellbeing statistics not changing

Transitions when leaving school and care: need life lessons in high school; a lack of alternatives esp for early school leavers; high unemployment, or jobs they are overqualified for; too few apprenticeships.

Education: opportunities for disadvantaged communities; constant comparisons, timing of exams, stress in year 12; career counselling; TAFE and training opportunities; support; reflecting technology change; social media impact

Children with additional/complex needs: support in schools for complex needs eg behavioural, DV-related; not enough tailoring; services for cohort before extreme complexity; lack of focus

Fragmentation: in funding esp between State and Commonwealth governments; no confidence in long-term funding; listen more to communities; in resources not spread evenly; in alignment of programs and policies across govt agencies, making sure changes don't conflict; in engagement between government, NGOs, local government

Other: hard to access to good staff; connections to appropriate built and natural environments limited; need youth services for all.

we asked you:

What **one big idea** do you have that could, if supported across the state, improve the lives of children and young people?

and we gave you some prompt questions:

What makes for **good child/young person-centred practice** in this area?

How can **children and young people** be involved?

What are some **effective local initiatives** that could be adapted and scaled up to be implemented across the state?

Are there **low cost/no cost options** that could work state-wide?

What **state-wide directions** currently support effective local decision making and service delivery for children and young people?

What **state-wide directions** currently hinder effective local decision making and service delivery for children and young people?



you told us your big ideas for the strategic plan*

Domestic and family violence: Educate teachers, principals, support staff, early childhood educators in trauma and the impacts on behavioural brain development, mental health, future relationships and learning development so they understand and behavioural drivers and respond appropriately.

Transitions: Universal, fully-funded transition program from home to early childhood education to school; from school to next major milestones. Eg build on the Early Start Engagement Centres (see the economic model developed by James Heckman <http://heckmanequation.org/>).

Education: a revamped National Education Strategy, with individualised funding (like NDIS), experiential learning, higher wages for teachers, eligibility to teacher training including more than academic achievement.

Support for Aboriginal children and young people: Focus on culture, safety, identify, education. All councils to hold a round table consultation for Aboriginal children and young people to develop a vision and integrated services.

Built and natural environment: Provide greater access to nature for children and young people's wellbeing. Look at removing school fencing (access to facilities, integration with community), gardens in schools, greater landscaping at parks, voices of children in designing access, remove fees for entry (eg national parks), natural play spaces and more.

Mental health: Change the short-term siloed funding structures in order to reduce barriers and create the best outcome from the person's point of view, regardless of the time needed.

Effective service integration: Introduce holistic, preventive parenting programs. Build on 7 Generations project, Right Door campaign, midwives and early childhood nurses to integrate health services, etc.

Activities: An integrated program of collaboration of a range of services for year 6 students being introduced to local services in their community.

And lots of other ideas about how to make the strategic plan work that we also captured.

thank you.



keep communicating with us via
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